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Washington Irving lived a long and productive life, and his work exerted a serious influence upon many important American writers who followed him. When he died in 1859, in Tarrytown, New York—near his beloved Sleepy Hollow—one commentator wrote that "thousands from far and near silently looked for the last time on his genial face, and mourned his loss as that of a personal friend and national benefactor." The sentiment is perfectly justified—for Irving was a great entertainer, a witty storyteller, and a consummate artist.

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